

TOO PLATONIC BY FAR.

I had sworn to be a bachelor, she had sworn to be a maid. Both agreed in doubting whether matrimony had any higher aims, for science told me my heart. And the two young affections were all wound up to her art.

She laughed at those wise men who say that "Twixt man and woman, unless each has something else to give."

We shared our sorrows and our joys, together.

Both our pulses sought the goal which young ambition reared.

We dined together of the days, the dream and the dream.

We were strictly confidential and called each other "suh."

And many a day we wandered together o'er the hills.

I soothed bugs and butterflies, and she ruined And rustic bridges and the like, which picture-makers prize.

To the mountain waterfalls, and groves, and sunsets.

And many a quiet evening, in hours of full release, I lay down the river, or leaned beneath the trees.

And talked in long gratation from the poet to the philosopher.

While the summer skies and my cigar burned slowly together.

But through it all no whispered word or telltale look or sigh.

Told each other a warmer sentiment than friendly sympathy. All the more of mine for he was of service to Mr. Valcour, who, so said, was a New York New York merchant, a frequent

"Well, good-by, old fellow!" I took her hand, for the time had come to go.

My going meant our parting, when to meet we did not know.

I had lingered long and said farewell with a very heavy heart!

For we were friends, you know, it's hard for friends to part.

"Well, good-by, old fellow! don't forget your friends in the west."

And some day, when you've lots of time, just drop the same name, gayly, but a great sob just behind.

Rose upward with a story of quite a different kind; And took her eyes to mine, great eyes of life.

Full to the brim and running over, like violet cups with dew.

One long, long look, and then I did what I never did before.

Perhaps the tear meant friendship, but I think the kiss meant more.

It was now more.

A SHIP SURGEON'S STORY.

JULIAN MAGNUS.

Author of comedies and short stories in "Harper's Magazine" and short stories in "A Drama in which Miss Clara Morris has acted all over the United States and Canada."

"Mrs. Parlington."

Illustration for the Sunday Oregonian.

It was on the fourth morning out from New York, on board the steamer Wallachia, of the International line, that I ascended to the deck at a very early hour. I was surprised to see a group of officers and seamen, standing a little forward of amidships, and all bareheaded. For a moment the significance of this did not occur to me, and as I strode forward, was something of a shock to find that in the center of the group was a body sewn up in canvas and just about to be committed to the waves. I had never before seen a funeral at sea, and though, as a rule, I shrink from the presence of death in any form, I lingered till the end, fascinated by the novelty of the surroundings. When the last words had been uttered, and the waters had closed over the form whose outlines made themselves so painfully prominent through the covering, I turned and walked toward the quarter-deck. I had only taken a few steps when Dr. Shaw overtook me.

"You are up unusually early," he said.

"Yes," I answered, "I have not yet got accustomed to the holystone of the decks over my head. Who has died?"

"One of the steerage passengers. He had some kind of a fever and died last night. I don't think it was contagious, but it was best to get the funeral over as soon as possible. By the way, Captain Watson sends his compliments and requests you will not say anything about the death to any of the saloon passengers."

"Certainly not. Do you generally bury people so quickly at sea?"

"I usually. Of course if the passenger is wealthy and has friends on board, and if we are within a short distance of port, we can arrange to preserve the body."

"And I suppose you have inquests on board ship?"

"What a splendid place it would be then for a poisoner to operate in!"

I was utterly unprepared for the effect which my chance remark had upon the doctor. His face turned suddenly a bluish white, and he staggered against the bulk-walk.

"What's the matter?" I cried. "You are ill. What shall I get you?"

"Nothing," he replied, with an evident effort to overcome his agitation. Then after a moment's pause, he asked almost forcibly: "Did you know anyone on board before you embarked?"

"Only you, and we have only met two or three times."

"Well, I don't suppose you want to make away with me," he said, with an ineffective attempt at a laugh.

"One does not die in your room. I must take something to tone up after this shock, and I owe you an explanation."

The toning up process was duplicated, and then, yielding to my urgent request, Dr. Shaw told his story.

"What I am going to tell you happened nearly twenty-five years ago, and as some of the parties are still alive, I won't give real names. At that time, ocean passage was averaged at least two or three days longer than they are now, when a youngster just out of college, and hospitable, and appointed to my first ship. One vessel from Liverpool to New York and back, was made without any stirring incident, but the next return voyage from New York was destined to leave an impression upon me, the effects of which I shall never forget. I saw just now, how your chancy words affected me. Well, if my nerves are so affected after the experience of nearly five years old, you may judge the state of mind at the time I am going to tell you about."

"It was in the month of December that we were preparing to leave port, and the passenger list was very light. I was congratulating myself that I should have very few to look after, for I had not yet got my steers any very firmly. But within a few minutes of our sailing time, a lady who was very weak and delicate was sent up to me, and carried up the gang-plank. A dark, hand-some woman, who had the appearance of a Frenchwoman, and who was very attentive to her and me. I once set her down as her husband, a conclusion in which I was not mistaken. The lady was taken down to her stateroom, and in a few moments after we were out in the river. The wind was light and favorable and there was no motion sufficient to annoy the passenger even when we were well outside the harbor. I had dropped in to the cabin. The captain had left the bridge and gone into his chart-room, and I was just about to go down and brush up for dinner when he came along the deck accompanied by the husband of the lady I had so carefully noticed.

"Dr. Shaw," said Captain Carew. "I want to introduce you to my friend, Mr. Valcour. His wife is something of an invalid, and anything you can do to aid her will be appreciated by us both."

"I bowed to Mr. Valcour and the captain, passed on to the wheel-house, leaving us together."

"Yes, my dear doctor, my wife is very delicate. She is a martyr to some inward

complaint which the best physicians seem unable to diagnose. I am taking the advice of Dr. Valcour, on the advice of Dr. Taylor, and is mentioned the name of or of New York's most eminent specialists."

"Dr. —'s opinion should be of the highest authority," I observed, "but it seems to me to be a very dangerous experiment to expose a lady who is so weak to the weather we are likely to have at this time of the year."

"My dear doctor, I quite understand your feelings. It is a dangerous clause, but I was assured it was 'only one and I would do anything to save my poor wife.' She will naturally require a good deal of your attention; furthermore, I am aware, that I can expect in the ordinary course of your service, please all your skill at her service, and you will not find me a liberal or ungrateful."

"What do you wish me to do?"

"I will speak to her now and let you know. He bowed and descended the companion stair. Although here was a great danger of his being of service to Mr. Valcour, he was still a good fellow, and I would like to have him in society again."

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